DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 449 376 CE 081 320

AUTHOR Imel, Susan
TITLE Adult Development. Trends and Issues Alert No. 22.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, OH.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 2001-00-00
NOTE 4p.
CONTRACT ED-99-CO-0013
AVAILABLE FROM For full text: http://www.ericacve.org/fulltext.asp.
PUB TYPE ERIC Publications (071)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Development; *Adult Education; *Adult Learning; Adults; Annotated Bibliographies; Developmental Psychology; *Developmental Stages; *Educational Resources; Midlife Transitions; Models; Race; Self Actualization; Sex; Sexual Orientation; Social Class; Sociocultural Patterns; Theory Practice Relationship; Transformative Learning

ABSTRACT

Theories about adult development have been grouped into four models: biological, psychological, sociocultural, and integrative. Biological models (those that are concerned with how physical changes affect development) and psychological models (those that view development as either sequential--defined by life events-- or as a series of transitions or as relational) have long been part of the adult education literature. Sociocultural and integrative models represent new ways of thinking about the influence of adult development on adult education. Sociocultural perspectives of adult development have as their primary focus the social and cultural aspects of adult lives. Factors such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation are considered important aspects of development in these models, including how these factors intersect and affect how adults develop. Integrative models examine how the biological, psychological, and sociocultural aspects of adult development intersect and influence each other, but models that consider all three perspectives are rare. Because of their recognition of the complexity of the factors that influence how adults learn and grow, integrative models seem to hold the most promise for understanding adult development. The role of transformative learning in adult development is another area that has received a great deal of attention recently. (The paper lists and summarizes 22 resources in the field of adult development and education.) (KC)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 449 376

Adult Development
Trends and Issues Alert No. 22

Susan Imel

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
Center on Education and Training for Employment
College of Education
The Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 081 320

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

TRENDS AND ISSUES ALERT NO. 22

by Susan Imel
2001

Adult Development

"It is hard to imagine the field of adult education apart from the literature on adult development; many aspects of our thinking about adult learners and the learning process are shaped by our knowledge of how adults change and develop across the lifespan" (Clark and Caffarella 1999a, p. 1). During the past decade, the literature on adult development, particularly as it relates to adult learning, has expanded. This ***Alert*** reviews some of the trends related to changing conceptions of adult development, highlighting connections to adult education.

Theories about adult development have been grouped into four models: biological, psychological, sociocultural, and integrative (Merriam and Caffarella 1999; Clark and Caffarella 1999a,b). Biological models—those that are concerned with how physical changes affect development—and psychological models—those that view development as either sequential, defined by life events or a series of transitions, or relational—have long been part of the adult education literature. Sociocultural and integrative models represent new ways of thinking about the influence of adult development on adult education.

Sociocultural perspectives of adult development have as their primary focus the social and cultural aspects of adult lives. Factors such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation are considered important aspects of development in these models, including how these factors intersect and affect how adults develop (Clark and Caffarella 1999b). The book, ***Adult Learning and Development: Multicultural Stories*** (Baumgartner and Merriam 2000), is an example of how sociocultural perspectives of adult development can be highlighted in adult learning.

Integrative models examine how the biological, psychological, and sociocultural aspects of adult development intersect and influence each other, but models that consider all three perspectives are rare. Because of their recognition of the complexity of the factors that influence how adults learn and grow, integrative models seem to hold the most promise for understanding adult development (Clark and Caffarella 1999b.). Rossiter's (1999) use of a narrative approach as a way to understand development through stories is an example of the integrative approach, and other examples are contained in Clark and Caffarella (1999a).

The role of transformative learning in adult development is another area that has received a great deal of attention recently (e.g., Daloz 1999; Hobson and Welbourne 1998; Mezirow and Associates 2000). Transformative learning is about making changes through transforming one's perspectives or meaning; making senses of these changes frequently involves development (Dirkx 1998). Daloz (1999) views education as a transformational process, suggesting it is a way that adults make meaning from their lives.

How adult educators can be more intentional in contributing to learner development is another trend. The most notable example is ***Developing Adult Learners*** (Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler 2000); the book contains strategies provided by practitioners, including their reflections about how the activity has worked. The ethics of being more intentional in the development of learners is an issue affiliated with this trend (Rossiter 1999). What should the role of an educator be in contributing to growth, for example? Is it appropriate to encourage learners to move forward in ways that could potentially disrupt their lives?

Adult development and adult education continue to be intertwined. The resources listed here can be consulted for more information.

Baumgartner, L., and Merriam, S. B., eds. ***Adult Learning and Development: Multicultural Stories***. Malabar, FL: Krieger, 2000.

The culturally diverse stories and poems in this compilation illustrate six themes of adult development: identity; the importance of work; intimacy; the family life cycle; physical development, health, and aging; and learning in adulthood.

Billett, S. "Ontogeny and Participation in Communities of Practice: A Socio-Cognitive View of Adult Development." ***Studies in the Education of Adults*** 30, no. 1 (April 1998): 21-34.

Adult development is considered to be the transformation of individuals' existing knowledge to construct new knowledge as well as the reinforcement of existing knowledge. Changes are individually, socially, and culturally determined.

Boucouvalas, M. "The Transpersonal Orientation as a Framework for Understanding Adult Development and Creative Processes." In ***Creativity, Spirituality, and Transcendence: Paths to Integrity and Wisdom in the Mature Self***, edited by M.E. Miller and S. R. Cook-Greuter. Stamford, CT: Ablex, 2000.

A movement known as transpersonal psychology has developed over the past 30 years. This movement recognizes that a separate self-identity is only a partial vision of what it means to be human; being human also involves perceiving the unity and connectedness of all things, not just cognitively but in other ways as well. This chapter offers an explanation of the transpersonal as an organizing framework for the understanding of the maturing self.

Clark, M. C., and Caffarella, R. S., eds. ***An Update on Adult Development Theory: New Ways of Thinking about the Life Course. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education***, no 84. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999a.

Reviews recent work in adult development in four domains—biological, psychological, sociocultural, and integrated—and explores the implications of the work for adult education.

Clark, M. C., and Caffarella, R. "Theorizing Adult Development." In ***An Update on Adult Development Theory: New Ways of Thinking about the Life Course. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education***, no. 84, edited by M. C. Clark and R. Caffarella. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999b.

Discusses definitional issues and tensions around adult development theory. Presents a typology of developmental theories.

Daloz, L. A. ***Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners***. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Explores the intersections of learning, mentoring, and development and how the mentor contributes to the learner's development.

Demetrion, G. "A Critical Pedagogy of the Mainstream." ***Adult Basic Education*** 8, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 68-89.

Links adult literacy learning to a philosophy of self-actualization, scaffolding pedagogy, and inclusion. Bases the discussion on John Dewey's concept of growth and Myron C. Tuman's developmental social theory.

Dirkx, J. "Transformative Learning Theory in the Practice of Adult Education: An Overview." ***PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*** 7 (1998): 1-14.

Summarizes four theoretical perspectives on transformative learning as consciousness raising, critical reflection, development, and individuation.

Erdmann, A. B. "Middle-Age Teaching: A Time of Vitality." ***Harvard Educational Review*** 68, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 583-587.

A middle-aged teacher reflects on her career. Although she had expected that middle age could be a time of complacency and possibly boredom, she instead experiences it as a vital time as her relationship to teaching deepens and changes.

Fenwick, T. "Women Composing Selves, Seeking Authenticity: A Study of Women's Development in the Workplace." ***International Journal of Lifelong Education*** 17, no. 3 (May-June 1998): 199-217.

A study examined the workplace learning experiences of 17 women, using oral-history methods. Central to the experiences was exploration of self. Themes included recognizing and naming the self, confronting and breaking free of constraining workplace structures, and recovering an authentic self.

Glover, R. J. "Perspectives on Aging: Issues Affecting the Latter Part of the Life Cycle." ***Educational Gerontology*** 24, no. 4 (June 1998): 325-331.

Reviews developmental perspectives on aging as well as strategies for successful aging and discusses problems unique to individuals in the latter part of the life cycle.

Hobson, P., and Welbourne, L. "Adult Development and Transformative Learning." ***International Journal of Lifelong Education*** 17, no. 2 (March-April 1998): 72-86.

A study of the literature indicates that adult development, from a transformative viewpoint, is more than adjustment to a particular society. It is a qualitative change in how the world is viewed and involves productive tension and struggle.

Kuchinke, K. P. "Adult Development Towards What End? A Philosophical Analysis of the Concept as Reflected in the Research, Theory, and Practice of Human Resource Development." ***Adult Education Quarterly*** 49, no. 4 (Summer 1999): 148-162.

Examines often unspoken assumptions about the concept of adult development held by the field of human resource development. Describes three alternative views, each rooted in different philosophical and political traditions: person-centered view, production-centered view, and principled problem-solving view.

Littleton, R., Jr. ***An Overview of Black Adult Development Theories.*** 1998. (ED 426 313)

Summarizes and discusses the conceptualized theories that are pertinent to the psychosocial development of culturally black adult students. Includes researchers who have provided alternative models and theories addressing the development needs of black college students.

McCloskey, J. "Three Generations of Navajo Women: Negotiating Life Course Strategies in the Eastern Navajo Agency." ***American Indian Culture and Research Journal*** 22, no. 2 (1998): 103-129.

Interviews with 78 Navajo grandmothers, midlife mothers, and young mothers examined their life course patterns in cultural and historical contexts.

Merriam, S. B., and Caffarella, R. S. ***Learning in Adulthood. 2d ed.*** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Part two of this book focuses on adults' developmental characteristics. Biological, psychological, age and stage models, cognitive development, and intelligence are covered.

Mezirow, J. and Associates. ***Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress.*** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Brings together the latest research and theory related to transformative learning, including implications for adult development. Contributors share examples from their own experiences as educators and assess the evolution of transformative learning in practice and philosophy.

Rossiter, M. "A Narrative Approach to Development: Implications for Adult Education." ***Adult Education Quarterly*** 50, no. 1 (November 1999): 56-71.

Contrasts stage and phase theories of human development with a narrative approach. Suggests that such an approach holds rich potential for understanding adult learners and the roles of educators in learners' developmental processes.

Smith, M. C., and Pourchot, T., eds. ***Adult Learning and Development: Perspectives from Educational Psychology.*** Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998.

Perspectives on adult development and learning are presented by educational psychologists in order to contribute to adult education. Includes information on adult intellectual function, thinking, and problem-solving skills and research on adult learning domains.

Taylor, K.; Marienau, C.; and Fiddler, M. ***Developing Adult Learners. Strategies for Teachers and Trainers.*** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Provides a conceptual framework linking intentions and development, dozens of proven activities framed by developmental intentions; and an examination of developmentally focused educational practices.

Wentworth, P. A., and Peterson, B. E. "Crossing the Line: Case Studies of Identity Development in First-Generation College Women." ***Journal of Adult Development*** 8, no. 1 (2001): 9-21.

Presents four case studies of adult women from working class backgrounds who attended one of the "seven-sister" colleges during the early 1990s. The context of social class is explored, particularly as it relates to identity concerns of adult women college students.

Wolf, M. A. "Kinds of Love by May Sarton: A Theoretical Framework for Educating Gerontologists." ***Educational Gerontology*** 25, no. 4 (June 1999): 317-330.

Describes how Sarton's book is used in gerontology classes as a text for studying human development by offering an opportunity to explore theory and research on aging.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education under Contract No. ED-99-CO-0013. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. ***Trends and Issues Alerts*** may be freely reproduced and are available at <http://ericacve.org/fulltext.asp>.

Center on Education and Training for Employment
College of Education
The Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus OH 43210-1090